

only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life"? Why, when He bids us to let our light so shine that others seeing our good works may glorify our Father which is in Heaven?

"In God's own might  
We gird us for the coming fight,  
And, strong in Him whose cause is ours  
In conflict with unholy powers,  
We grasp the weapons He has given,—  
The Light, and Truth, and Love of Heaven.

Austin College.

### LOVE.

By Rev. J. W. Lafferty.

The thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians is one of the most beautiful passages in the Bible, and in fact in all literature. But it was not meant simply to please the aesthetic taste. The purpose is to show us the loveliness and supreme excellence of the chief Christian virtue,—to make us fall in love with it, that we may desire it and follow after it. That which is described in this chapter in such exquisitely beautiful style, and held up for our admiration is love. In the King James version it is called "charity," but the English word "charity" does not have today the full meaning of the original Greek word which in other places in Scripture is translated love. This word, *agape*, was not used in classic Greek at all. It is a peculiarly scriptural word and expresses an idea, and stands for a thing, which the heathen world did not have. The classical Greek word for love, *eros*, expresses the love that springs from sensual passion, and was too deeply dyed in pagan associations to be used for the Christian love.

This love, spoken of in the Scriptures, then, is different from natural affection,—the affection between husbands and wives, parents and children, and so forth. One may have such natural affection and be wholly lacking in the love described in this chapter. This love is a spiritual affection, possessed by those who are born of God. "God is love." "Love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." (1 John 4:7, 8.) This love is mentioned as the first and most important fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). The first and great commandment is to love. (Matt. 22:38). "Love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:10). It shows in what a lost and ruined condition the world was that it was wholly lacking in this which is the very essence of virtue,—had not only lost the thing itself, but the very idea, so that it had no word to express it. Christianity restores unto us this love, and the importance in which it is held is shown by the fact that the word *agape*, love, with its cognates, the verb and adjective, is used more than three hundred times in the New Testament. Christianity is just full of this new love, which was wholly lacking in the ungodly world.

The thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians is wholly occupied with this subject, and sets forth the necessity of having love (as without it all that we say, all that we have, and all that we do, amounts to nothing); then the characteristics of love are described; and finally its eternal permanence is emphasized.

How important, then, that we use every means to cultivate love. There is not much that we can carry out of this world with us. Material possessions must be left behind; not much of the knowledge acquired in this life will be of permanent value; it is, at the best, partial, dim, and will be superseded. But love will endure.

Our life in this world is the childhood period of our existence, and should be occupied chiefly in cultivating love. Students of child-nature tell us that the emotions are developed before the intellect. The child loves before he can understand, and we make a great mistake if we begin by educating a child's intellect rather than its emotions. The education of the emotions comes first.

And, as the apostle suggests in this chapter, our present life in this world is related to the future life as childhood to manhood. Our present occupation, pleasures, achievements, are but as the play and toys of the nursery as compared with the future life. The toys, the methods, the pleasures of childhood are set aside when manhood comes, but the emotions, which they have been the means of cultivating, remain. So with the Christian, the things of this world shall vanish away, but love remains and develops and increases. Of what little worth are the possessions and the achievements of this present time as compared with love which shall endure, while they pass away. Seek love above all things. Use everything for its cultivation.

God is love—Jesus is love. Jesus was long-suffering and kind; patient, and endured all things. He was not envious, not proud, not selfish. He is the living picture of love, and the fountain of love for us. Having Christ formed in us we have love. Cultivate it. "Follow after love" (1 Cor. 14:1).

Concord, N. C.

### WHY CHURCHES DO NOT PROSPER.

I must say that not a little of the difficulty in filling vacant places, and in preventing vacancies, has arisen from the fault-finding, unsympathetic and exacting attitude of many of our people, they expect a clergyman to fill their church, and yet they themselves do what they can to keep it empty by habitually staying away from church, or attending only when they please. They demand of him that he shall be alert, while they themselves are apathetic. They fail to pay their church dues and so create a deficit, and yet they are vexed that the cry of a deficit should be raised so often. They wait to see whether all will like the new minister, while they know very well that they do not all like one another. In view of this state of things, may not one fairly put to the dissatisfied parishioners the question of the Master: "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? First cast the beam out of thine own eye; and then thou shalt see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." —Bishop Hare.

Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,  
These three alone, lead life to sovereign power.

—Tennyson.